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William F. Allen

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## THE PREDESTINATION OF MARY IN THE LIGHT OF MODERN CONTROVERSY

It is very apropos that from the outset of this paper we delineate exactly what we are attempting to accomplish through it. Our very modest goal is to give you the *status quaestionis* up to the present moment of a very old theological problem. We are going to consider the various solutions proposed by theologians to the existence and circumstances of the decree, or the act of the will of God, freely and *ab aeterno*, determining the existence of Mary, the Blessed Mother of God, at a very definite moment in the history of the world. Such is the meaning of the word predestination in this paper.<sup>1</sup>

We must also remark a detail about our method. Since Mary is intimately and necessarily associated with Christ, the Savior, and since Mary would not have existed if Christ had not been born, it is evident that we cannot solve the problem of the predestination of Mary unless we situate it in the more fundamental question of *Cur Deus Homo?* When we ask how necessary Mary was to the plan of God, we cannot answer

<sup>1</sup> For a more comprehensive study of this question cf. J. M. Rocca-G. M. Roschini, O.S.M., *De ratione primaria existentiae Christi et Deiparae*, Romae, 1944; C. Berti, O.S.M., *Animadversiones in articulum "De ratione primaria existentiae Christi et Deiparae"* PP. Mag. Rocca et Roschini, O.S.M., in *Marianum*, vol. 3, 1941, p. 124-151; Rocca-Roschini, *Sul così detto motivo dell' Incarnazione; Consensi e dissensi*, in *Marianum*, vol. 3, 1941, p. 151-169; Idem, *Intorno alla ragione primaria dell'esistenza di Cristo e della Madonna*, in *Marianum*, vol. 3, 1941, p. 301-371; Idem, *Ancora sulla ragione suprema dell'esistenza di Cristo in questo mondo. Breve risposta al P. Bonnefoy*, in *Divus Thomas* (Plac.), vol. 43, 1943, p. 271-282; Idem, *Intorno alla questione sul cosiddetto motivo dell' Incarnazione*, in *Miscellanea Francescana*, vol. 48, 1948, p. 296-305; *L'Ami du Clergé*, 1921, p. 524-525; 1922, p. 696-698; 1931, p. 345-348, 412-413; 1950, p. 33-48, 96-112; Jean-Fr. Bonnefoy, O.F.M., *La primauté absolue et universelle de N.-S. Jésus-Christ et de la Très-Sainte Vierge*, in *Bulletin de la Société Française d'études mariales*, 1938, p. 41-100.



until we have found out what part Christ played in that plan. Whatever is predicated about the predestination of Christ is applicable, *debitis servandis*, to Mary.

Some may be tempted to say: why waste our time on this purely speculative question? *Cui bonum?* The interest of theologians on this point has been very great. Why? Because the mind must first solve this question before it can adequately appreciate the role assigned to the Adorable Son of God upon the world by the Eternal Father. Our appreciation, our love and devotion to Christ and His Blessed Mother is susceptible to growth in depth and in amplitude from a better understanding of this problem. Does not that alone justify our interest therein?

We take up the controversy in its old and modern dress. The question is: how necessary a place did Jesus and Mary occupy in the divine decrees from all eternity? Did sin bring Christ? or would He have come even if man had not sinned? Were we made for Christ, or was Christ made for us? Was the Incarnation subordinate to the Redemption? Such is the problem expressed in varied terms.

*In History:* Rupertus Tuitiensis (1135), a pioneer in this problem, wrote that the Word of God would have become incarnate even if man had not sinned; the sin of Adam conditioned the decree of the Will of God only insofar as sin brought Christ in passible flesh, destined to suffer and to die for the Redemption of mankind.<sup>2</sup> After him, in royal lineage theologically speaking, came Albertus Magnus, Robert Grosseteste (1253), Scotus (1308), Petrus Aureolus (1345), Bartholomew of Pisa (1380), Bernardine of Siena (1444) and, in general, all of the Scotistic School.<sup>3</sup> In the last three cen-

<sup>2</sup> *De gloria et honore Filii Hominis*, lib. 13, P.L. 168, 1624; cf. 1628-1630.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Rocca-Roschini, *De ratione primaria* . . . , p. 12-13. Most of the texts of the Fathers and of Tradition have been gathered together in two works of prime importance, namely: Père Chrysostome, O.F.M., *Christus*



turies could be found in the same school of thought, Msgr. Gay, Faber, Cardinal de Berulle, Francis de Sales, to mention but a few of the more outstanding men of the time.<sup>4</sup>

St. Thomas departed from this conclusion and whilst he did not deny its possibility in the realm of speculation, he thought that from a serious consideration of the actual plan of God on the world, we should conclude that, had man not sinned, the Word would not have become Incarnate.<sup>5</sup>

St. Bonaventure admired the Scotistic conclusion but declared that the opinion of Thomas was nearer to what was evidently found in Sacred Scripture and Tradition.<sup>6</sup>

The opinion of Thomas was sustained by such stalwarts as Cajetan, Gonet, Salmaticenses, Billuart, Hugon, Garrigou-Lagrange and the Dominican School of Theology.

In more recent times in France we find a very substantial work under the humble pen name of a Friar Minor of the Province of France. Entitled *Christus Alpha et Omega seu de Christi Regno Universali* (1910), it defended ably the thesis of Scotus. In 1911 the *Nouvelle Revue Théologique* of Louvain carried the controversy between Père Galtier, S.J., and Père Chrysostome, O.F.M. In 1921 Père Jean-Baptiste de Petit-Bornand, O.M.C., published in the *Etudes Franciscaines* some very pertinent remarks on the motive for the Incarnation, and finally Père A. d'Alès, S.J., the renowned theologian of Paris, disputed vigorously the opinions of Père Chrysostome in the May issue of *Etudes*, Paris, 1922.

In the very recent past, namely, in 1941, the controversial question received new impetus from two professors of the International College of the Servites in Rome, Gesualdo M.

*Alpha et Omega, seu de Christi universali regno*, Lilli, 1910, and *Le Motif de l'Incarnation et les principaux thomistes contemporains*, Tours, 1921. Cf. also *Dictionnaire de Théologie Catholique*, vol. 7, col. 1489-1491.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. P. Chrysostome, *Le Motif de l'Incarnation* . . ., p. 206, 236, 285, 326.

<sup>5</sup> *Summa Theologica*, III, q. 1, a. 3.

<sup>6</sup> *In IV Sent.*, dist. 1, a. 2, q. 2; *In III Sent.*, dist. 1, a. 2, q. 2.



Rocca and M. Gabriele M. Roschini. In the magazine *Marianum*, of Rome, and later in book form, these two professors attempted to reconcile the Thomistic and Scotistic opinions.<sup>7</sup> The R. P. Corrado M. Berti, O.S.M., the R. P. Leone Veuthey, O.F.M.Conv. and the R. P. J.-F. Bonnefoy, O.F.M., with the R. P. Garrigou-Lagrange, O.P., were quick to attack the attempted compromise.<sup>8</sup>

With such patent evidence of interest in our thesis we will attempt to give the Thomistic, Scotistic and Rocca-Roschini versions of the difficulty, along with the views of the R. P. Bonnefoy.

*Scotus*: To Scotus is attributed the glory of being the chief advocate and defender of the opinion that even if man had not sinned, the Incarnate Word would have existed. God in all His Works *ad extra* had planned everything in relation to the Word made Flesh. The world was created, the Angels and Man endowed with the supernatural life of grace because of Christ and their loyalty to Him. The Incarnation was willed by God Himself as the highest and most perfect communication that God could make to the human race of Himself and it was thereby that He constituted His Divine Son in the supreme and absolute primacy of the entire creation. "In ipso condita sunt universa in coelis et in terris, visibilia et invisibilia, sive throni sive dominationes, sive principatus sive potestates; omnia per ipsum et in ipso creata sunt et ipse est ante omnes et omnia in ipso constant . . . quia in ipso complacuit omnem plenitudinem inhabitare." *Ad Coloss.* I, 15-19.

Furthermore, the opinion continues, when God, the Father, contemplated sin entering the world, He was moved to make the Incarnation the instrument of the Redemption of mankind. Christ had been decreed as part of the Divine Plan on

<sup>7</sup> Cf. *Marianum*, vol. 3, 1941, p. 4 sqq.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. C. Berti, *art. cit.*, p. 124. Also Rocca-Roschini, *De ratione primaria* . . . , p. 113-128, 143.



the world but now in the hypothesis of sin, Christ would still come but this time not impassible and immortal but in a body destined to suffering and death. Without sin we would have had Christ, glorious and impassible and immortal; with sin in the picture, we will have Christ, the Crucified, and Mary, the Co-redemptrix, the Sorrowful Mother. In this new phase of the Divine Plan, Christ is still in His absolute and universal primacy; still are verified the words "vos autem Christi, Christus autem Dei." But above all this, there will now shine in the adorable Christ, not only the perfection and grandeur of the hypostatic union, but also the most sublime communication of the Love of God, boundless and fathomless in the expiation of man's sin.<sup>9</sup>

*Their Proofs.*<sup>10</sup> The followers of Duns Scotus search the Scriptures for texts relative to that aspect of Christ's work, namely, His primacy. They are found principally in the Books of Wisdom wherein Wisdom is spoken of as preceding creation and even presiding over that immense work. They give to the word Wisdom, not the meaning of a divine attribute, nor a poetical existence and personification but they see in the word Wisdom, the *Incarnate Word*.<sup>11</sup> The R. P. Chrysostome tells us in erudite argument that this sense of the word must be accepted since it was thus accepted in the struggle against Arianism.<sup>12</sup> "Dominus possedit me in initio viarum suarum antequam quidquam faceret a principio" (*Prov.* 8, 22) and "Ab aeterno sum et ex antiquis antequam terra fieret" (*Eccles.* 24)—both are interpreted in this sense that even before its

<sup>9</sup> Cf. *Joannis Duns Scoti, Doctoris Mariani, Theologiae Marianae Elementa* (ed. C. Balic, O.F.M.), Sibenici, 1933, p. 1-16, 175-186. On the teaching of Scotus cf. C. Balic, O.F.M., *La prédestination de la Très-Sainte Vierge dans la doctrine de Jean Duns Scot*, in *La France Franciscaine*, vol. 19, 1936, p. 114-158; Rocca-Roschini, *De ratione primaria . . .*, in *Marianum*, vol. 3, 1941, p. 7; *L'Ami du Clergé*, 1922, p. 696.

<sup>10</sup> Rocca-Roschini, *De ratione primaria . . .*, Romae, 1944, p. 19-23.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. *L'Ami du Clergé*, 1922, p. 697 sqq.

<sup>12</sup> Cf. *Le Motif de l'Incarnation . . .*, p. 14.



creation, the world was willed for the Incarnate Word. We might remark in passing the doubt that this interpretation does represent the unanimity of the Fathers; even if it did, would it denote Christ's priority in creation as one of causality or merely one of excellence?<sup>13</sup>

It is in St. Paul's letters that this thesis makes its most appealing bid for preference.<sup>14</sup> Paul took up the idea of primacy and the kingship of Christ. Boldly he tells us that God created all for Christ and in anticipation of Christ. "In ipso condita sunt universa in coelis et in terris, visibilia et invisibilia, sive throni sive dominationes sive principatus sive potestates; omnia per ipsum et in ipso creata sunt et ipse est ante omnes et omnia in ipso constant . . . quia complacuit omnem plenitudinem in ipso inhabitare . . ." (*Coloss.* 1, 15-19). Christ is delineated as the *causa finalis et exemplaris* of all creation. His primacy is active and real and dominant since Christ is "caput principatus et potestatis" (*Coloss.* 2, 16) and the Supreme advocate and Victim for all before His Eternal Father "per eum reconciliare omnia in ipsum, pacificans per sanguinem crucis ejus, sive quae in terris sive quae in coelis sunt" (*Coloss.* 1, 20). Here, too, we must remark that all these texts do bear upon the universal royalty of Christ, but it is open to dispute as to the basis of this royalty and the titles upon which the royalty is founded.<sup>15</sup>

*Tradition and the Scotists.* When Tradition is called upon to witness the truth of our thesis or to refute it, we must bear in mind that no absolute and conclusive argument can be expected. The Fathers wrote about the present, *de facto* order of creation such as it now exists. They did not write about a hypothetical order; what God would have done if sin had not been committed by our first parents. Hence it is unfair to

<sup>13</sup> *L'Ami du Clergé*, 1922, p. 697.

<sup>14</sup> Rocca-Roschini, *op. cit.*, p. 20-23.

<sup>15</sup> *L'Ami du Clergé*, loc. cit.



conclude to the untruth of the theory that bases itself on a hypothetical order just because the Fathers are in default of testimony thereon.<sup>16</sup>

The Scotists seem to be favored by the Fathers. They find in Tradition a general affirmation of the primacy of Christ and of His predestination regardless of sin. Cyril of Alexandria and St. Athanasius tell us that we were created for Christ and not Christ for us lest we consider ourselves superior to Him. And St. Maximus writes: "Iste (Christus) beatus finis, ob quem cuncta condita sunt. Hic divinus scopus origine rerum prae-cognitus, quem definiendo esse dicimus praeconceptum finem cujus gratia omnia, ipse vere nullius gratia. . . . Propter Christum . . . omnia saecula et quae in ipsis saeculis sunt, principium et finem ut essent in Christo nacta sunt."<sup>17</sup> Surely there is no testimony more fitting to the thesis of the universal and royal primacy of Christ than the above.

The texts of Genesis and their context are cited in favor of the Scotists. The text "in principio," i. e. in Christo, Deus creavit caelum et terram.<sup>18</sup> Clement of Alexandria, Origen, Ambrose, Jerome and Augustine thus interpreted the "in principio." Many Fathers saw Christ as the *causa exemplaris* of the creation of Adam and Eve and this union in turn symbolized the union of Christ and His Church.<sup>19</sup> More than that, Christ was the *causa exemplaris* and *finalis* of all creation, according to the same Fathers. The Scotists interpret them in favor of Christ predestined in a body glorious and immortal, impervious to suffering. . . .

Père Chrysostome in his excellent book draws the patristic argument with superb finesse. He shows without doubt that many of the Fathers professed the belief that all grace, even

<sup>16</sup> Rocca-Roschini, *op. cit.*, p. 20-23. Idem, *De ratione primaria . . .*, in *Marianum*, vol. 3, 1941, p. 13.

<sup>17</sup> P.G., 90, 622A.

<sup>18</sup> Cf. P. Chrysostome, *Christus Alpha et Omega . . .*, p. 43-49.

<sup>19</sup> P. Chrysostome, *op. cit.*, p. 61-71.



the grace given to the angels and to Adam in the pre-sin state was the fruit of the Incarnate Word.<sup>20</sup> It would seem that at least this conclusion must be drawn from the Fathers in favor of the Scotistic opinion.

*The Thomists.* Against this universal and absolute primacy championed by Duns Scotus whereby Christ would have come in any order actually decreed by God, there is the traditional thesis of Thomism: "If man had not sinned, the Word would not have become Incarnate." True, this thesis is definitely marked Thomistic. But when we search the writings of St. Thomas we find that the Master did not deny the possibility of the other view of the problem. It was with a certain degree of hesitancy that Thomas affirmed the above thesis ascribed to him and his school of thought.<sup>21</sup>

The nerve center of this Thomistic theory rests on this point: God's first idea of the world did not include the Incarnation; His grace was going to be given gratuitously to the angels and to man without any consideration of the merits on the part of the Incarnate Word since the latter had not entered into the Father's plans; the one obstacle to the realization of this first plan was the sin of Adam; when this disrupted God's plan, then the Incarnation-Redemption as the means of replenishing the source of grace was decided upon; once decided upon, Christ's eminent dignity entailed for Him from His Father, the place of honor in the plan of creation: Christ and with Christ, His Mother Mary, became the King of the entire creation — King of the Angels and of man. The Thomists declare that sin was the occasion of this grandiose plan of God — it was not the cause thereof and God planned it thus to manifest His immense love and for the triumph of His glory by the ministrations of His Mercy and Justice.<sup>22</sup>

<sup>20</sup> *L'Ami du Clergé*, 1922, p. 697.

<sup>21</sup> *Summa Theologica*, III, q. 1, a. 3. In III Sent., dist. 1, q. 1, a. 3.

<sup>22</sup> Cf. Rocca-Roschini, *De ratione primaria . . .*, in *Marianum*, vol. 3, 1941, p. 8-11.



*The Proofs of Thomism:* To support their theory the Thomists call upon all the texts of Scripture which have to do with Christ, the Redeemer and Saviour. In the Old Testament there is an abundance of texts apropos of the Promised One, the Messiah, the Redeemer, the Innocent Victim led to the slaughter without murmuring a word! (*Is.* 70, *Dan.* 9, 25 *Mich.* 5, 5). There is also the oft-cited text of the lapsus of Adam wherein it is predicted that someone would come to crush the head of the serpent. (*Gen.* 3, 15). The angels on the night of Christ's birth sang the song of the Redeemer, of the Saviour. (*Matth.* 1, 21; *Luc.* 2, 10). St. John openly declares that it is worthy of acceptance by all and indeed must be held by all that Christ came into this world *to save sinners* (*I ep. Joan* 3, 5).

As for tradition, the Thomists are more favored by the number of texts to be cited. It is only too true that the Fathers of the Church, the vast majority of them, seemingly favor the Thomistic thesis. Clement, Ignatius, Justin, Irenaeus, Tertullian from the infant days of the Church write in that vein and Cyril of Alexandria gives us their conclusion: "If we had not sinned, the Word of God would not have been made like unto us."<sup>23</sup> In reality, the point of dispute was not defined until the days of Albert the Great and Alexander of Hales. Thus it is not astounding to find the early Fathers and Doctors of the Church cited today in favor of Thomism when actually they were expressing the only view that was proposed in their day, namely, the actual order and plan of God *de facto*. John Chrysostom, Gregory, Ambrose, Leo all agree with Athanasius when he declares: "If no creature were to have existed, the Word of God would have existed; but the Word would not have become Man if there had not been the necessity of saving sinners."<sup>24</sup>

<sup>23</sup> *Dial.* 5, *de Trinitate*, P.G., 75, 968.

<sup>24</sup> Cf. *Dictionnaire de Théologie Catholique*, vol. 7, col. 1489-1491.



*Conclusion:* A very precise and exact conclusion as to the contribution of Revelation on this disputed point might well be: there is nothing decisive one way or the other. There is no conclusion that can be noted with any theological distinction other than "probable."<sup>25</sup>

*Attempted Compromises and Reconciliations:* Perhaps Suarez was the first to attempt a reconciliation of both theological opinions on this question of whether the Word would have become man if sin had not entered into the plan of God. He proposed the theory that there is a double aspect to the Incarnation. The Thomistic opinion stresses the reparation of sin and views Christ as the Redeemer and surely this is a sufficient reason for the Incarnation. It should be viewed as the most striking expression of the perfection of the works of God. Both schools of thought have somewhat of truth but the Scotistic one is more complete.<sup>26</sup> In 1922 P. Galtier, S.J., tried to revive this compromise but with little success. To many it seemed to miss the point of finality; this seems to exact one definite reason and only one; and again many thought that the heart of the difficulty still remained: would the Incarnation have taken place without sin having entered therein?<sup>27</sup>

More recently, Fr. Carmelus ab Iturgoyen, O.M.Cap., offered a substitute for both sides. According to him, the life of Christ in the Scotistic theory embraces both this world and that of eternity and affords a more general amplitude to Christ's works: everything in Christ's life is directed to His eternal and glorious life in heaven. The scope of the Redemption (as in the Thomistic Theory) limits the scope of Christ's work to the destruction of sin and its expiation. It is a partial view of Christ's role. In this solution, the Thomistic theory

<sup>25</sup> Cf. D. Bozzola, S.J., *De Verbo Incarnato*, Neapoli, 1948, p. 130; *L'Ami du Clergé*, 1922, p. 698; 1949, p. 675.

<sup>26</sup> Rocca-Roschini, *op. cit.*, p. 13-14.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*



becomes purely and simply an adjunct to the Scotistic Theory—this indeed did not merit favor.<sup>28</sup>

*The Rocca-Roschini Theory.* These two authors, professors at the International College of the Servites in Rome have greatly contributed to Marian thought in the past twenty-five years. How do they solve the problem—Would the Word have become Incarnate, if Adam had not sinned?

Firstly, the authors depart sharply from the two traditional theories by saying that we must take the present order as decreed by God as our field of action and speculation. It is idle and vain to say “if man had not sinned. . .”<sup>29</sup> The only source of information available for a conclusion, namely, Revelation, concerns the present order of things and not a hypothetical order. Hence, the problem should read: Why did the Word become Incarnate in this present order? What is the motive, the primary reason for the Incarnation and for the existence of Christ and His Blessed Mother in this present order of creation? Note the change of perspective!

*The Meaning of the Incarnation.* What meaning shall we give to the word Incarnation? Shall we limit it to simply the hypostatic union and nothing else? Shall we add to this concept all the circumstances of time, place, people, procedures connected with the event of Bethlehem? Or lastly shall we go further still and make it mean the entire work of the God-Man? Our authors prefer and adopt the third meaning for the word Incarnation. What in particular? Incarnation means for them the entire vocation of Christ: the extending of the Kingdom of His Father over all creation in law and in fact so that all creatures would be subject to Him, the Son, and through Him to the Father for all eternity. Note once again the difference in perspective. Incarnation pure and simple,

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>29</sup> Rocca-Roschini, *De ratione primaria . . .*, passim. Idem, *art. cit.*, in *Marianum*, vol. 3, 1941, p. 16-26.



Incarnation—Redemption—these are no longer in question. There is a wide signification attached to the word.

Sin did not move God. The constituting of a primacy did not move God. The authors say: God's free choice and selection of the present order is the reason for the Incarnation as it actually took place with all its necessary adjuncts such as sin and Christ's possibility and mortality. And why this act of free will on the part of God? Because this present order alone would correspond to what God had decreed from all eternity as the adequate expression of His Goodness *ad extra* and a fitting testimonial to His infinite and extrinsic glory.

Since the order is freely chosen by God, unity and infallibility will mark its execution and there is no room for speculation or for hypothetical question! <sup>30</sup>

We call your attention once more to a marked departure from the traditional theories. It was not sin nor the establishment of a primacy for His Beloved Son that motivated the Incarnation in the decrees of God; it was simply God's free choice, with a view of sharing with us His Goodness and of adding to His extrinsic glory in the most perfect manner.

*Deductions:* The reason for Christ's suffering, for Mary, Co-redemptrix and adjutrix at the foot of the Cross, and for *O certe necessarium Adae peccatum*—the reason is now clear. The permission of sin in the present order was given for Adam's own good and for that of the entire human race!

*In His Plan, to Whom Did God Give Priority—  
To Christ or to Sin?*

Which came first in the plan of God: Sin or Christ? The Thomists say sin; the Scotists claim the Incarnate Word. Our authors, Fathers Rocca and Roschini, refuse the priority to sin in the plan of God, since it is a mere negation, a privation of moral goodness and because it represents a partial aspect

<sup>30</sup> Rocca-Roschini, *loc. cit.*



of Christ's mission, namely, the destruction of sin, the Redemption. Sin was only permitted to strengthen and embellish the Primacy and Kingship of Christ.<sup>31</sup>

These were attributes of Christ in virtue of His Hypostatic Union but once sin was permitted, these were of Christ, not any longer by pure birth-right, but by title of acquisition in His Agony and Death! Sin, too, served to make more manifest in this Kingship the infinite Goodness of God and produce an infinite accretion to His own honor and glory. What we say of Christ, must apply to Mary. Destined to be Queen in that Kingship by birth, she, too, acquires it *aliquo modo* at the foot of the Cross through her immediate co-operation in the Redemption of mankind.

*In Opposition: P. Bonnefoy, O.F.M.*<sup>32</sup> Whilst Father Bonnefoy is in accord with many of the details of the above theory, he does take exception to the reason adduced for the Incarnation. Citing a text of St. Thomas, the good opponent derides anyone who gives as the reason for the existence of a thing, the will, the free choice of God, that a thing exists because God so desired that it should! (After all, Fathers Rocca-Roschini did hold that apropos of the Incarnation.) We cannot be satisfied with that answer no more than a child would be if you told him that fire burned because God wished it to burn! There are other reasons. The Incarnation is a particular fact in the complex order of creation and there are reasons assigned to such facts. Ergo.

Our authors reply that the Incarnation is not a particular fact in the complex order of creation and, therefore, secondary causes, created in themselves, have no influence over it. The Incarnation proceeds solely from God. In fact, the Incarnation is the reason for the existence of the world. So nothing of the world could have an influence in the Incarna-

<sup>31</sup> *L'Ami du Clergé*, 1931, p. 412-413.

<sup>32</sup> Rocca-Roschini, *art. cit.*, p. 29-31.



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tion. Whatever proceeds solely from God, does so in virtue of a divine decree of God's free will. The Incarnation is in that class. Who could unite in substantial union, human nature with the divine nature in the Person of the Incarnate Word? No one but God. The Blessed Virgin might co-operate in forming the body, but not in effecting the substantial union of the Word. The free act of the omnipotent will of God alone could effect that. Ergo.

Again, Father Bonnefoy tries to belittle the reason adduced by Fathers Rocca and Roschini by asserting that the true reason for the Incarnation must be that the Incarnation is the most perfect way for God to communicate Himself to creatures. In reply, our authors say that human reason together with any possible secondary cause could never have exacted or presumed to exact such a perfect communication of God as we witness in the Incarnation wherein the Word of God assumes into His Divine Person human nature and gives to this latter an existence real and personal! This communication is so extraordinary that it must depend solely on the free choice and election of the Divine Will. No creature, no sin could have exacted it. The world itself could not have exacted it since the Incarnation is the reason why the world exists. Yes, it behooved God to communicate Himself as the Infinite Goodness in the most perfect manner, yes, but only if He freely wills it! Thus we end with the same reason: the free act of God's will.

In the third place, Father Bonnefoy attacks this theory on the grounds that it does not bring out the absolute primacy of Christ since Christ and the order of creation all seem to be one in virtue of the free choice of God, established from the beginning. This assertion is not true since the basis for our theory is the Incarnation understood in a very broad sense and embracing Christ's complete vocation which in turn means establishing His universal primacy and kingship—but all this



is done in virtue of, and because of, the divine decree without interference of any secondary causes.<sup>33</sup>

*In conclusion:* If Adam had not sinned, would the Word have become Incarnate? Yes, claim the Scotists, for the Word Incarnate was meant by God to be the highest and most perfect communication of Himself to human nature and also the means of establishing Christ's primacy and kingship. Sin simply changed the circumstances for all this.

No, say the Thomists. Christ was not predestined to come until sin entered to obstruct the plan of God on this world. Then Christ was predestined as the Redeemer for the destruction of sin and also in redeeming man to manifest God's infinite goodness, Mercy and Justice.

Yes, asserts Suarez, because the Incarnation has a double mission in God's plans: Redemption and Kingship.

Fathers Rocca and Roschini reject the hypothetical character of the question. Christ's coming, the Incarnation of the Word, was meant to happen as it actually happened because of the free choice of Almighty God and this choice was destined to manifest freely God's infinite Goodness and to increase God's extrinsic glory.

Father Bonnefoy decries this conciliation because it denies or dims the absolute and unconditional primacy and kingship of Christ by its rigid planning and establishment by divine decree.<sup>34</sup>

REV. WILLIAM F. ALLEN, S.T.D.  
St. Mary's Church  
Pittsfield, Mass.

<sup>33</sup> Rocca-Roschini, *op. cit.*, p. 128-143.

<sup>34</sup> We regret that the limited space at our disposal makes it impossible for us to acquaint our readers with the remarkable theory on Mary's predestination as elaborated by the eminent French theologian, Jean-Fr. Bonnefoy, O.F.M. A lengthy exposition of it is found in his *La primauté absolue et universelle de N.-S. Jésus-Christ et de la Très-Sainte Vierge*, in *Bulletin de la Société Française d'études mariales*, 1938, p. 41-100. Cf. J. B. Carol, O.F.M., *Recent Literature on Mary's Assumption*, in *The American Ecclesiastical Review*, vol. 120, 1949, p. 381-384.